

PUBLIC HOSPITAL SYSTEM, NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

**12. Mr A.P. O'GORMAN to the Minister for Health.**

I refer to an article written by Paul Murray in *The West Australian* of Saturday, 25 February 2006, with the headline "McGinty's looking like Minister for Miracles". Can the minister please outline some of the miracles that are being performed in Western Australia's public hospitals every day?

**Mr J.A. McGINTY replied:**

I thank the member for Joondalup for that question. From time to time we hear criticism of our public health system, both in the media and from members opposite. However, the doctors and nurses in our public hospitals perform extraordinary medical feats every day, which often pass unnoticed except by the patients and their immediate families. One and a half million people are treated in our public hospital system each year, and truly a great number of miracles are performed to keep those people alive. For that reason, last week I was delighted to see Channel Seven's *Today Tonight* program run a series of stories on some of the medical miracles that occur in our public hospitals every day. As members are aware, *Today Tonight* is the state's highest-rating current affairs program, and I believe it has given an inspirational insight into what really happens in our public hospitals.

There was the story of Rhys Huggins, who was the first and youngest patient at the time to undergo open heart surgery at the Princess Margaret Hospital for Children. He was diagnosed with transposition of the great arteries at birth. He was just nine days old when surgeon David Andrews successfully reversed the arteries in an operation that took approximately six hours. This was an amazing medical feat, given that his heart was the size of a walnut and that the operation took place in an area the size of a thumbnail. Rhys is now a happy, healthy five-year-old.

There was also Jeff Woodward, a glider pilot who crashed into powerlines near Quairading and suffered horrendous facial injuries. Jeff received emergency treatment at the Quairading District Hospital before being sent to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, where surgeons set about reconstructing his face. This intricate and complex operation took about five hours, and was the first of five major operations carried out on Jeff in 24 months. Jeff has recovered well and, amazingly, is now back flying his glider.

Stacey Larson was rushed to the emergency department at Royal Perth Hospital in a serious condition in November 1994 after being doused with petrol and set alight by her husband. Stacey was lucky to be alive -

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I call to order the member for Leschenault and the member for Nedlands.

**Mr J.A. McGINTY:** Stacey was lucky to be alive -

**Mr J.H.D. Day** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I call to order the member for Darling Range.

**Mr J.A. McGINTY:** Stacey had third-degree burns to her arms, face, neck, chest and thighs. In fact, 60 per cent of her flesh had been burnt to the bone. She spent two months in hospital and received treatment at Royal Perth Hospital from the world-renowned burns team, which includes Dr Fiona Wood. Over six years Stacey underwent intensive surgery, physiotherapy and psychological treatment. She has now recovered and has moved on with her life. She has remarried, has two children and is again dancing competitively. All these are remarkable stories. Each of these people would be dead but for the amazing professionalism and ability of the doctors and nurses in our public hospitals. These are just some of the stories that occur every day in our public hospitals. I take this opportunity to commend each and every one of the staff who work in our public health system.